

Rhode-Island Baptist.

EDITED BY ALLEN BROWN,
Preacher of the Gospel.

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CONTINGENCY.

Many suppose that unless God has decreed all things which transpire, that what he has not decreed must necessarily be contingent. Is this so? Does not his foreknowledge preclude the possibility of contingency? What he foreknows, will as certainly take place, as what he predestinates. Why then quarrel with the decrees? We do not, as we understand them; nor dare we. Who are we, that we should reply against their author? We would bow with humble reverence and devout adoration, before his "awful throne," and listen to all his sovereign declarations, treasure them in our hearts, and acknowledge them as eternal truth. He is God and there is none else. What we are dissatisfied with, are the declarations of men on this subject; declarations which, to us, represent Him, whom the scriptures declare to be "good to all," and whose "tender mercies are over all his works," as not only partial to some, but unjust and cruel in the highest degree. With these representations we are dissatisfied, not only for this reason, but because they shoulder all the sin and guilt in the universe on God; whereas, admitting our view of the decrees, viz: such a view, as leaves man in possession of *real moral agency*, with power to choose, through grace, either life or death, good or evil, and the foreknowledge of the Deity, his perfections

and throne are left unsullied, and the burden of iniquity is placed on him who ought to bear it. And as every thing not decreed must occur according to the prescience of the Most High, the argument of contingency amounts to nothing. All the affairs of the universe, move on with beautiful harmony and regularity, such as he has decreed or purposed, according to that decree or purpose, such as he foreknew, according to that foreknowledge. But suppose that in contending for the moral agency of man, we are driven to admit contingency in the Divine Government ; would it not be better to do this than to admit that God is the author of sin ? A thing impossible to be, because contrary to his holy nature, and word of truth. If therefore, in saying that some things are, and do take place, which were not purposed or decreed by the Great Jehovah, we suppose such contingency as has been mentioned, it would be more rational to do this, than to suppose an *impossibility*, which we should by giving such a construction to the Divine Decrees, as would make him, who is "glorious in holiness," the Father of all crime.

Again, it would be more philosophical to suppose such contingency, than to admit a glaring *contradiction*. This contradiction is suggested when it is said, that though one performs an action, that, it was decreed, he should perform, and which he could by no possible circumstances avoid, that deed is his own, and in performing it, he is voluntary ; i. e. he is as much obliged to do this action, though not according to the same laws, as the stars are to shine, being incited to it by a *powerful*, though invisible hand ; and yet, it is of his free choice. I know it will be asked here, how do you know that it is a contradiction ? How do you know, that God may not decree and necessitate all your actions, and yet you be free ? How can you tell unless you can comprehend him, in all his plans and purposes, and councils, and even know what he is able to accomplish ? We would ask in reply, how it is known that, according to our system, a contingency exists in the Divine Government ; what will be replied ? Will not this be the reply ? It evidently

appears so from the circumstances, we know by our reason. We give, then, the same answer to their question. To our reason it appears a contradiction. We conclude it to be so, by the same powers, that we conclude black, is not white, bitter, is not sweet, that a triangle, is not a circle. On this point, we are, therefore equal—on the main one, the advantage is still with us: we may still suppose, that it were more consistent to admit a *contingency*, than a *contradiction*, in the Divine Government.

We have introduced this subject, and made these remarks in relation to it, because, to our mind the objection of contingency in the Divine Affairs, is the most plausible and forcible one, that is offered against what is called the Arminian system of faith. This obviated and they who propose it, need propose no other.—How far our remarks do this, the candid reader will judge. If they are understood, we do not well see, how they can fail to satisfy others, as they have done ourselves.

THE PROVIDENCE OF GOD.

Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. Math. 10. 29.

ILLUSTRATION.

“During a heavy storm of thunder and rain, while some persons were standing at the door of the mission-house, the lightning was seen to descend upon or near a small tree, about ten or twelve rods from the door, from which a smoke instantly arose, as from the combustion of feathers, and as soon disappeared. From the circumstance of the smoke’s ascending immediately after the descent of the lightning, several were induced immediately to examine the place, when they found a small bird lifeless near the tree, with his feathers burnt and his body torn. No other effect of the lightning was to be discovered.—*Journal of the Mission at Brainerd.*”

REMARKS.

The feathers of the bird have hitherto been considered as its shield against the attacks of lightning. But when the Almighty directs it, non-conductors become conductors. How easy for him to suspend what we call the laws of nature? He can cause the sun to go back on the dial of Ahaz, or to stand still, while Joshua pursues the foes of Israel. As far as we can judge, here was a real miracle; if, indeed, philosophers have not been mistaken, with regard to feathers being non-conductors. We think they cannot be, as doubtless, satisfactory experiments on this subject have been made. We have the more confidence to believe so, at this time, as not long since, our papers contained an account of the demolition of a cage by lightning, while its beautiful little prisoner, a live bird, escaped unhurt. This also forcibly illustrates the text above: and still more forcibly a parallel one, Luke 12. 6. expressed somewhat differently, "are not five sparrows sold for two farthings? and not one of them is forgotten before God." This little native of the air was not forgotten—he was preserved amid the fragments of the ruined cage.—Had nature in the present case, its course, the tree had been riven and not the bird. Or had the tree been riven, the death of the bird might easily have been accounted for—the flying splinters might have destroyed it. But it seems the tree was not injured, while in the midst of its boughs, the little chorister was destroyed, and its plumage burnt. We know not what impression this occurrence made on the minds of them who saw it; but, if the above words of our Saviour were brought to their recollection, it must, we think, have deepened their conviction of an over-ruling Providence; and taught them, that though in the wilderness, they being "of more value than many sparrows," God regarded, and if they trusted in him, would protect them; and, that none are safe, who do not "abide under the shadow of the Almighty." In tempests of thunder and lightning, many, instructed by the light of philosophy, use suitable precautions to avoid a prema-

ture or rapid death by the electric fluid. This is laudable. We ought to regard the course of nature, and employ our knowledge to preserve ourselves against untoward providences, or what are generally called casualties or disasters. But we ought also to remember, that all our precautions and prudence, without the blessing of our heavenly Father will answer little purpose, he being able to reach us, when we think ourselves the most secure. A bow drawn at a venture, smote the king of Israel, though on the battle ground in disguise, between the joints of the harness. We should therefore trust in God; and this, more especially, as we know, on the other hand, that he is able to preserve us, when our circumstances, to all human appearances, are the most desperate. Though in a furnace of fire, the flame did not kindle upon the three Hebrews: though a viper fastened upon Paul's hand, he received no injury.

For the Rhode-Island Baptist.

MR. EDITOR—In your introduction to the first number of the Rhode-Island Baptist, you say, “at present our business is to supply hints and fragments.” If you should think the following calculated to aid in the accomplishment of your object, you are at liberty to give it insertion in some of your future numbers. It is taken from Butler's Analogy, Ar. 6th, entitled “Of the opinion of Necessity considered as influencing Practice.”

Suppose a fatalist to educate any one, from his youth up, in his own principles; that the child should reason upon them, and conclude that since he cannot possibly behave otherwise than he does, he is not a subject of blame or commendation, nor can deserve to be rewarded or punished: imagine him to eradicate the very perceptions of blame, and commendation out of his mind, by means of this system; to form his temper, and character, and behaviour to it, and from it to judge of the treatment he was to expect, say from reasonable men,

upon his coming abroad into the world ; as the fatalist judges from this system what he is to expect from the author of nature and with regard to the future state. The child would doubtless be highly delighted to find himself freed from the restraints of fear and shame, with which his play fellows were fettered and embarrassed, and highly conceited in his superiour knowledge so far beyond his years. But conceit and vanity would be the least bad part of the influence which these principles must have, when thus reasoned and acted upon, during the course of his education. He must either be allowed to go on and be the plague of all about him, and himself too, even to his own destruction, or else correction must be continually made use of, to supply the want of those natural perceptions of blame and commendation, which we have supposed to be removed, and to give him a practical impression of what he had reasoned himself out of the belief of, that he was an accountable child, and to be punished for doing what he was forbid. It is therefore in reality impossible, but that the correction which he must meet with, in the course of his education, must convince him that if the scheme he was instructed in were not false, yet that he reasoned inconclusively upon it, and some how or other misapplied it to practice and common life ; as what the fatalist experiences of the conduct of Providence at present, ought in all reason to convince him that this scheme is misapplied when applied to the subject of religion. But supposing the child's temper would remain still formed to the system, and his expectation of the treatment he was to have in the world be regulated by it, so as to expect that no reasonable man would blame or punish him for any thing which he should do, because he could not help doing it—upon this supposition it is manifest he could, upon his coming abroad into the world, be insupportable to society, and the treatment which he would receive from it would render it so to him, and he would not fail of doing some what very soon for which he would be delivered over into the hands of civil justice. And thus, in the end,

he would be convinced of the obligations he was under to his wise instructor. Or suppose this scheme of fatality in any other way applied to practice, such practical application of it will be found equally absurd, equally fallacious, in a practical sense. For instance, that if a man be destined to live such a time, he shall live to it, though he take no care of his own preservation ; as if he be destined to die before that time, no care can prevent it ; therefore all care about preserving one's life is to be neglected, which is the fallacy instanced in by the ancients. But now on the contrary, none of these practical absurdities can be drawn from reasoning upon the supposition that we are free ; but all such reasoning with regard to the common affairs of life is justified by experience. And therefore, though it were admitted that this opinion of necessity were speculatively true, yet with regard to practice, it is, as it were false, so far as our experience reaches ; that is to the whole of our present life. For, the constitution of the present world, and the condition in which we are actually placed, is as if we were free. And it may perhaps justly be contended, that since the whole process of action, through every step of it, suspense, deliberation, inclining one way, determining, and at last doing as we determine, is as if we were free, therefore we are so."

This reasoning appears to me conclusive, and I see not why it may not be applied to the Calvinian notions of decrees, election, reprobation, and perseverance. I would speak with modesty on these mysterious subjects, aware that many great, and learned, and holy men have most sincerely believed them. They cannot, however, it is thought, be made to harmonize with the present constitution of the world or the nature of man. They appear or seem to contradict the sentiment that—God is the moral Governor and Judge of mankind, and will deal with every man according to his works. They seem alike at variance with natural and revealed religion. If they are true, they are of no practical utility. We cannot act according to them in

the affairs of this life, and in our religious concerns the attempt would be equally preposterous. These doctrines teach that all our actions and volitions are determined by unalterable and eternal decrees, our future destiny, whether happy or miserable, depends on God alone, is also immutably fixed, and nothing that we do, or can do, will have any influence on our present or future condition. To act strictly according to this system we must live as we list, free from all restraints either from ourselves or others and that too under the fullest conviction, that whatever we do is right. For if our actions are in perfect accordance with a decree of our Maker, either those actions are right or (with reverence be it spoken) that decree is wrong. To do this, however, is impossible, because conscience accuses when we do wrong, and, such is the constitution of our nature, whatever be our speculative opinions, that we know, we are as certain of it as of our own existence, we are free. It follows, then, that even if these doctrines are true, we act, and are obliged to act as if they were not. These thoughts were occasioned by reading the extract with which I present you, and if you perceive any thing harsh or censorious in them, or any thing which can *justly* give offence to the most pious of your readers or even to Calvinists themselves, I beg you will consign them to oblivion. Although I have expressed my thoughts freely on the doctrines mentioned; yet it is of doctrines only I speak, not of those who believe them. Of them I entertain the highest regard and wish ever to cherish the most cordial affection and fellowship toward them. If in some few things we differ, it is in those chiefly which are speculative not essential, while we can both unite in the sentiment expressed by an inspired writer—that secret things belong to the Lord our God; but those things which are revealed unto us, and to our children forever.

O. F. B.

THE JEW.

Travelling lately through the western part of Virginia, I was much interested in hearing an old and highly respectable clergyman give a short account of a Jew, with whom he had lately become acquainted. He was preaching to a large and attentive audience when his attention was arrested by seeing a man enter, having every mark of a Jew on the lineaments of his countenance. He was well dressed, his countenance was noble, though it was evident his heart had lately been the habitation of sorrow. He took his seat and was all attention while an unconscious tear was often seen to wet his manly cheek. After service the clergyman fixed his eye stedfastly upon him, and the stranger reciprocated the stare. The good minister goes up to him; "Sir, am I correct, am I not addressing one of the children of Abraham?" "You are." "But how is it that I meet a Jew in a Christian assembly?" The substance of his narrative was as follows:

He was a very respectable man of a superiour education, who had lately come over from London: and with his books, his riches, and a lovely daughter of seventeen, had found a charming retreat on the fertile banks of the Ohio. He had buried the companion of his bosom before he left Europe, and he now knew no pleasure but the company of his endeared child. She was indeed worthy of a parent's love. She was covered with beauty as a mantle; but her cultivated mind, and her amiable disposition, threw around her a charm superiour to any of the tinselled decorations of the body. No pains had been spared on her education. She could read and speak with fluency several different languages, and her manners charmed every beholder. No wonder, then, that a doating father, whose head had now become sprinkled with gray, should place his whole affection on this only child especially as he knew no source of happiness beyond this world. Being a strict Jew, he educated her in the strictest

principles of his religion, and he thought he had presented it with an ornament.

It was not long ago that this daughter was taken sick. The rose faded from her cheek, her eye lost its fire, her strength decayed, and it was soon apparent that the worm of disease, was rioting on her vitals. The father hung over the bed of his daughter with a heart ready to burst with anguish. He often attempted to converse with her, but seldom spoke but by the language of tears. He spared no trouble or expense in procuring medical assistance, but no human skill could extract the arrow of death now fixed in her heart. The father was walking in a small grove near his house, wetting his steps with his tears, when he was sent for by the dying daughter. With a heavy heart he entered the door of the chamber, which he feared would soon be the entrance of death. He was now to take a last farewell of his child, and his religion gave but a feeble hope of meeting her hereafter.

The child grasped the hand of her parent with a dead cold hand. "My father, do you love me?" "My child, you know I love you; that you are more dear to me than all the world beside!" "But, father, do you love me?" "Why, my child, will you give me pain so exquisite? Have I never given you proofs of my love?" "But, my dearest father, do you love me?" The father could not answer, the child added, "I know, my dear father, you have ever loved me—you have been the kindest of parents, and I tenderly love you. Will you grant me one request? O, my father, it is the dying request of your daughter—will you grant it?" "My dearest child, ask what you will, though it take every cent of my property, whatever it may be, it shall be granted. I will grant it." "My dear father, *I beg you will never again speak against JESUS OF NAZARETH.*" The father was dumb with astonishment. "I know," continued the dying girl, "I know but little about his Jesus, for I was never taught. But I know that he is a Saviour, for he has manifested himself to

me since I have been sick even for the salvation of my soul. I believe he will save me, although I never before loved him. I feel that I am going to him—that I shall ever be with him. And now, my dear father, do not deny me; I beg that you will *never again speak against JESUS OF NAZARETH!* I entreat you to obtain a Testament that tells of him; and I pray you may know him; and when I am no more, you may bestow on him that was formerly mine.”

The exertion here overcame the weakness of her feeble body. She stopped; and the father’s heart was too full even for tears. He left the room in great horror of mind, and ere he could again summon sufficient fortitude, the spirit of his accomplished daughter had taken its flight, as I trust, to that Saviour whom she loved and honoured, without seeing or knowing. The first thing the parent did after committing to the earth his last earthly joy was to procure a Testament. This he read, and taught by the Spirit from above, is now numbered among the meek and humble followers of the Lamb!—*Ch. Her.*

METAPHYSICAL.

[*Continued from last number.*]

This moral liberty a man may have, though it do not extend to all his actions, or even to all his voluntary actions. He does many things by instinct, many things by the force of habit, without any thought at all, and consequently without will. In the first part of life, he has not the power of self-government any more than the brutes. That power over the determinations of his own will, which belong to him in ripe years, is limited, as all his powers are; and it is, perhaps, beyond the reach of his understanding to define its limits with precision. We can only say, in general, that it extends to every action for which he is accountable.

This power is given by his Maker, and at his pleasure whose gift it is, it may be enlarged or diminished, continued or withdrawn. No power in the creature can be independent of the Creator. His hook is in its nose; he can give it line as far as he sees fit, and, when he pleases, can restrain it, or turn it whithersoever he will. Let this be always understood, when we ascribe liberty, to man, or to any created being.

Supposing it therefore to be true, that man is a free agent, it may be true, at the same time, that his liberty may be impaired or lost, by disorder of body or mind, as in melancholy, or in madness; it may be impaired or lost, by vicious habits; it may, in particular, be restrained by divine interposition.

We call a man a free agent in the same way as we call him a reasonable agent. In many things he is not guided by reason, but by principles similar to those of the brutes. His reason is weak at best. It is liable to be impaired or lost, by his own fault, or by other means. In like manner, he may be a free agent, though his freedom of action may have many similar limitations.

The liberty I have described has been represented by some philosophers as inconceivable, and as involving an absurdity.

"Liberty" they say "consists only in a power to act as we will; and it is impossible to conceive in any being a greater liberty than this. Hence it follows, that liberty does not extend to the determinations of the will, but only to the actions consequent to its determination, and depending upon the will. To say that we have power to will such an action, is to say, that we may will it, if we will. This supposes the will to be determined by a prior will; and, for the same reason, that will must be determined by a will prior to it, and so on in an infinite series of wills, which is absurd. To act freely, therefore, can mean nothing more than to act voluntarily; and this is all the liberty that can be conceived in man, or in any being."

This reasoning, first, I think, advanced by Hobbes, has been very generally adopted by the defenders of necessity. It is grounded upon a definition of liberty totally different from that which I have given, and therefore does not apply to moral liberty, as above defined.

But it is said that this is the only liberty that is possible, that is enviable, that does not involve an absurdity.

It is strange indeed! if the word *liberty* has no meaning but this one. I shall mention three, all very common. The objection applies to one of them, but to neither of the other two.

Liberty is sometimes opposed to external force or confinement of the body. Sometimes it is opposed to obligations by law, or by lawful authority. Sometimes it is opposed to necessity.

1st. It is opposed to confinement of the body by superiour force. So we say, a prisoner is set at liberty when his fetters are knocked off, and he is discharged from confinement. This is the liberty defined in the objection; and I grant that this liberty extends not to the will, neither does this confinement, because the will cannot be confined by external force.

2dly. Liberty is opposed to obligation by law, or lawful authority. This liberty is a right to act one way or another, in things which the law has neither commanded nor forbidden; and this liberty is meant when we speak of a man's natural liberty, his civil liberty, his christian liberty. It is evident that this liberty, as well as the obligations opposed to it, extends to the will: for it is the will to obey that makes obedience; the will to transgress that makes a transgression of the law. Without will there can be neither obedience nor transgression. Law supposes a power to obey or to transgress; it does not take away this power, but proposes the motives of duty and of interest, leaving the power to yield to them, or to take the consequence of transgression.

(*To be continued.*)

SCRIPTURE ILLUSTRATIONS.

Genesis, xlviii. 14, 15. And Israel stretched out his right hand, and laid it upon Ephraim's head—and his left hand upon Manassah's head—and he blessed Joseph.

"I endeavoured to bind him by the most solemn oath used by the Bedouins: laying his hand upon the head of his little boy, and on the forefeet of his mare, he swore that he would for that sum (fifteen piastres) conduct me himself, or cause me to be conducted to the Arabs Howeytat, from whence I hope to find a mode of proceeding in safety to Egypt."—*Burckhardt*, p. 398.

This extract, says the editor of the *Christian Observer*, also shows the respect felt for the animal mentioned in the ceremony, and softens the apparent harshness of the figure in Solomon's Song, i. 9. "I have compared thee, O my love, to a company of horses in Pharaoh's chariots." This simile may seem harsh to a European, but it is not so to an Oriental.

Amos vii. 10. I will bring baldness upon every head.

Esek. xxix. 18. Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, caused his army to serve a great service against Tyre; every head was made bald.

To take off the turban from the head in the presence of strangers is esteemed a great reproach among the nations of the east. The sacred prophets, in denouncing judgments on their countrymen, frequently mention this mark of ignomy.

"The Sheikh of the Towara Bedouins, an old man, seeing escape impossible, sat down by the fire, when the leader of the Maazy came up, and cried out to him to throw down his turban, and his life should be spared. The generous Sheikh, rather than do that, which, according to Bedouin notions, would have stained his reputation ever after, exclaimed, "I shall not uncover my head before my enemies;" and was immediately killed with the thrust of a lance."—*Christian Observer*.

THE FALL OF THE LEAF.

“Now the leaf
Incessant rustles from the mournful grove ;
Oft startling such as, studious, walk below,
And slowly circles through the waving air.”

The leaves of trees and plants, from the expansion of their form, from the greenness of their hue, from the beauty with which they overspread the vegetable world, and from their various and abundant uses to animals, are well calculated to engage our attention. In most instances they are absolutely requisite to vegetable life. Their capacity of perspiration, and their powers of absorption, have been amply demonstrated. The affinity of their upper surfaces to the light, the extreme sensibility of some of their species, and their power of imbibing impure, and giving out salubrious gases, are surprising.

They have been resorted to for the purpose of imparting system to botanical arrangement. The leaves of the acanthus ornament the Corinthian capital. The conquerors in the Grecian games were compensated with leaves of the olive or the laurel, the parsley or the pine. When Nebuchadnezzar, in his glory, is compared to a tree, it is observed that “the leaves thereof were fair.” An “olive leaf, plucked off,” was an intimation to Noah that the waters of the deluge were subsided. The man whose hope the Lord is, resembles a tree planted by the waters: “her leaf shall be green.”

But if leaves, in their vigour, interest the mind, their decay presents lessons of instruction. The dried leaf of the tree was probably the first material employed for communicating ideas by writing. The falling leaf is adduced by the patriarch Job, as an emblem of frailty and affliction: “Wilt thou break a leaf driven to and fro? and wilt thou pursue the dry stubble?”

“Should a quicker breeze amid the boughs
Sob o’er the sky, the leafy deluge streams.”

The flight of leaves from the parent tree may aptly remind us of the changing nature of all earthly objects. They flourish but to decay. Man is a sinner; a descendant from ancestors who, to conceal their dishonour, sewed together fig-leaves, and made themselves aprons. Persisting in transgression, let him tremble at the voice of Heaven. "I will surely consume them," said the Lord:—the leaf shall fade, and the things that I have given them shall pass from them." Lucan, describing the flight of Pompey, says: "He trembled at the noise of the groves, moved by the wind." The same image is used in the sacred volume. "Upon them that are left alive of you, I will send a faintness into theirs, in the hands of their enemies; and the sound of a shaken leaf shall chase them; and they shall flee as fleeing from a sword; and they shall fall when none pursueth." "A dreadful sound is in his ears." Job, xv. 21.

The autumnal season has been considered as a symbol of our subjection to mortality. In this view, it is often referred to by the ancient poets. Homer, for instance, has the idea—

"Like leaves on trees, the race of man is found,
Now green in youth, now with'ring on the ground."

The prophet Isaiah uses the same comparison. "All we do fade as a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away." It is a fact, well known, at least to the botanist, that near the base of every leaf in nature, a bud is found, which presents an assurance of the detachment of the protecting stem. Our offspring, as they arise around us, at once our consolation and care, premonish us, that "instead of the fathers, shall come up the children." They are to occupy our station; and they, in their turn, are destined to fall. It is observable that the withering leaves, about the close of September, assume new colours. The cheerful green subsides, and is succeeded with a vesture of brown, yellow, or of crimson. How similar is the cha-

racter of the Christian; who, as the day of dissolution approaches, is frequently seen more beauteous in the graces of his profession: yet, unlike the changing leaf, he is blessed with a lively hope that the beauty of the Lord God shall rest upon him for ever.

The passage in the Night Thoughts, has deservedly been admired, where the author, lamenting the death of the youthful Narcissa, says:

“Like blossom’d trees, o’erturn’d by vernal storms,
Lovely in death the beauteous ruin lay.”

The fine idea was perhaps suggested to the mind of Dr. Young by the words of the prophet Ezekiel, where Israel is compared to a vine. Successive seasons had passed away, and no fruit was borne. “Thus, saith the Lord God, shall it prosper? It shall wither in all the leaves of her spring.” Happy if youth did but realize the idea, that no summer, no autumn of their existence, may ever be attained. Their season of withering may be *spring*.

It is observed by Dr. Lowth, that the Hebrew poets were accustomed to deduce their imagery, frequently, from objects in themselves inconsiderable or mean: but that nothing is lost, from this circumstance, in relation to sublimity. Where, as in the pages of inspired writers, there is a peculiar propriety in the figures employed, simplicity is itself sublime. An observation of this nature can scarcely be better illustrated, than by the passage in Isaiah, where the fall of a universe is compared to the fall of a leaf. “All the host of heaven shall be dissolved, and the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll: and all their host shall fall down, as the leaf falleth off from the vine.”

Leaves are employed for medicinal purposes. After the conflict of Christian with Apollyon, Mr. Bunyan says: “There came to him a hand with some of the leaves of the Tree of Life, the which Christian applied to the wounds that he had received in the battles and was healed immediately.” That sacred tree continues

to flourish, and its leaves are for the healing of the nations.—*Latter day Luminary.*

THE PLEASURES OF SICKNESS.

1st. As we are social beings, it is pleasant to experience those manifestations of sympathy which are sure to be called into action by sickness. A man feels that he is not alone in life. He perceives himself linked with thousands of others. All their anxieties and all their attentions afford him pleasure.

2d. It is pleasant to perceive in full operation that deeper, stronger love which exists in the breasts of those nearly related to us; to behold that love in all the richness of spontaneous action overflowing with tenderness and care. We regret causing anxiety, but that anxiety is, nevertheless a source of pleasure.

3d. It is pleasant to discover how many are the comforts calculated to alleviate; how many well adapted helps there are of which we knew nothing before we wanted them:—the skill of physicians, the assiduity of nurses, the power of medicines, the multitude of little soothing ministers which wait and watch with prompt assiduity.

4th. The sensation accompanying the experience of relief from suffering is indescribably pleasant. While all our powers are in full play we have no idea of the sweetness of health, but when pain and disease have held possession of the frame, then to feel them passing off and vigour and ease once more returning—oh! it is delightful. A glow of gratitude fills the heart. The strong recollection of what we have just undergone makes, by contrast, every moment pleasant, and we are as persons born to new and more exhilarating hopes.

5th. There is great pleasure in retirement from the bustle of the world. All is quiet in the sick chamber—no scenes of business invade its silent precincts.—

Even to the man who loves employ there is pleasure in occasionally escaping from turmoil—and surely he who knows the preciousness of quiet, whose rich delight it is, in the secret of his heart, to hold converse with his God, he cannot but rejoice at the opportunity of retirement. Oh! it is sweet to lie and look upward—to think of that Father who for Christ's sake has forgiven us—to implore that Spirit, which like the dew on Hermon, descends to refresh the soul, to experience the fulfilment of those promises which are as the green pastures and still waters.

6th. The idea that you are thus experiencing profit is an abundant source of pleasure. To think that your Father has appointed your sickness because he loves you; that by it he means to draw you nearer to himself, to purify you, and prepare you to walk more steadfastly in your christian course is most charming. And then the lifting up of the light of his countenance upon you, always great in proportion to your need—truly it is no cause of wonder that many have regretted the departure of sickness because with it departed their extraordinary consolation.

7th. And oft at such a time we may be more beneficial to the souls of others than during the hours of health. No plea is more a mistaken one than that, that in the period of sickness we are laid aside from being useful; indeed, we may then be most useful, the peace of God enabling us to bear our sickness patiently; others may learn the power of that peace. The same help aiding us to exhibit many christian virtues; and, beside all, to counsel, to instruct; and also, to express the hopes, and the triumphant peace possessing the soul, our sickness may prove the most powerful sermon.—*Phil. Recorder*.

CONSECRATING OF THE JEWS SYNAGOGUE.

On the 29th of August, 1823, an interesting scene took place in the Great Synagogue, Jews'-place, Lon-

don. The building having been thoroughly over-hauled and repaired, and fitted up in great splendour, the ceremony and consecration commenced.

Soon after 5 o'clock, the hour appointed for the ceremony, the Chief Rabbi, attended by the Wardens, Elders, and other officers of the Synagogue, bearing the rolls of the laws, appeared at the door of the Synagogue; the Chief Rabbi was in his full costume under a canopy of state supported by six persons; the Chief Rabbi then exclaimed, "open unto us the gates of righteousness; we will enter them and praise the Lord;" they then all entered in procession, preceded by six little boys tastefully attired, each carrying a large silver basket filled with different flowers, which they strewed along the path over which the procession passed. In this manner they circumambulated the synagogue seven times, during which time seven appropriate psalms were chanted by the Reader and Choir, the musick of which was exceedingly grand.—Upon the procession approaching the Ark for the seventh time, the rolls of laws, which were all secured in peculiar cases, most splendidly ornamented, were severally placed within the Ark. The Chief Rabbi then delivered a prayer on behalf of the whole congregation, in which he particularly noticed the providential discovery of the state of the building. Three of the rolls were then taken from the Ark and conveyed in procession to an elevated spot in the centre of the Synagogue, when the reader surrounded by all the officers, delivered in a very solemn manner, in the Hebrew language, a prayer for the king and royal family.

After this the rolls of laws being replaced in the Ark and some other peculiar forms of service having been gone through, a subscription was opened towards defraying the expenses of the building and in a very short time nearly one thousand pounds was collected. The mode of conducting the subscription was a most curious one; for the Sabbath having just commenced as the subscription was opened, no money or checks passed, and every moment one might see the officers who

were collecting the names of the subscribers hold up their fingers to any friends whom they saw at a distance, which was to ask him how much he meant to subscribe. As many fingers as the individual held up in return he was immediately set down for so many guineas. The subscriptions were afterwards announced in Hebrew; after this was over the ordinary forms of the Sabbath eve commenced.

ELEGANT EXTRACT.

Give me to know that the doctrines of Jesus is bread from Heaven, and that it sustains the spirit, and prepares it for Heaven; and I may well be indifferent whether that bread descended, like the manna in the desert, in nightly dew, or whether, like the food of Elijah, it was brought to my eager hands by the ravens, or whether it was broken, for myself and the hungry thousands around me, by a hand endued with miraculous powers. So long as I know that it was sent me by the Father of my spirit, and that eating it I shall live for ever, I know all that can give it value, or awaken my gratitude. When some friendly hand presses a cup of cold water to my lips, as I am fainting with thirst in a weary land, I will not ask, for I do not care, whether that water was showered from the skies, or whether it flowed in a river, or gushed from a spring. I ask not whether it was brought me in a golden urn, or whether it was presented in a chrystal vase, or a soldier's helmet. It is water that bids me live, and that is enough for me.—*Pierpont's Sermon.*

DECLINE OF MAHOMETANISM.

The following important communication, says the London Baptist Magazine for October, may be de-

pended upon as authentick ; it is from the pen of a gentleman whose rank and character render his testimony indubitable.

“ You ask me if the Mahomedan religion is on the decline. I answer ; In Persia they can scarcely be called Mahomedans : they are Deists, if any thing, and are ready to receive the Christian faith. A few such men as Martyn would soon effect a change. You cannot conceive the eagerness with which they ask for his translation of the New Testament. I have distributed several hundreds, and could have done so with twice the number if they had been sent me. At Mecca, the resort is so much fallen off, that not one in a hundred (perhaps if I were to say two hundred I might be nearer) now goes, for those that did. Indeed the revenues in consequence of this have so much decreased, that in lieu of overflowing treasuries, the Ottoman government is obliged to make large remittances for the payment of its officers and troops. Those pilgrims who now resort make no offerings or presents ; they are satisfied with going. Indeed, from my own observation, after a residence of near twenty years amongst the Arabs and Persians, I can safely say that Islamism is fast falling to decay.”

MADAGASCAR.

This extensive and fertile island of the Indian ocean has recently been wholly converted to christianity and civilization, by the Missionaries of the London Association. In June last, the British Governour of the Mauritius, Sir Robert Farquahar, visited the island with two men of war, and was received by the Prince Rataria and Rene, the principal chiefs, at Tamatave, with every token of respect. An exchange of presents took place ; and the black chiefs remarked that silver and gold they had not, but such as they had they gave freely ; and it was said to be gratifying to see many

thousand natives bringing their presents of plantains, yams, cocoa nuts, &c. The chiefs dined on board the British men of war, and were received with salutes and honours paid to persons of high rank. The progress in civilization and Christian feelings made by these islanders is very great and their rigid execution of the treaty made with their king for the *abolition of the slave trade*, is highly commendable, and reflects no great credit on the Christian nations who have pertinaciously endeavoured to avoid engagements in this particular. Six years ago they were blinded by complete barbarism; but their eyes have been opened, and they now rejoice and are happy in the blessed idea of having become a civilized nation. Madagascar is eight hundred and forty miles long and of nearly equal width; and it is calculated that seven millions of human beings have been heretofore sold from it as slaves to different nations. The soil of the island is excellent, the climate genial; and large quantities of sugar and silk are annually produced. The people are a mixed race, but are intelligent and good humoured, and murder and theft are now unknown among them. The King Randama has an army of 220,000 men (which may be called militia,) and 20,000 of them are as well disciplined as any troops in Europe. Two thousand of them were exercised before their British visitors, and fired volleys, the word of command being given in English. The Governour, and his suite, dined with the Prince at Foul-Point and his two wives did the honours of the table much to their satisfaction; and every thing indicated, that they wanted only the patronage and attention of the Christian World, to become a wealthy, happy, and commercial nation.—*London paper.*

For a day in thy courts is better than a thousand.
I had rather be a door-keeper in the house of my God,
than to dwell in the tents of wickedness.—Ps. 84, 18.

POETRY.*From the New Monthly Magazine.***THE TREASURES OF THE DEEP.**

What hid'st thou in thy treasure-caves and cells ?
 Thou hollow-sounding and mysterious main !
 Pale glistening pearls, and rainbow-colour'd shells,
 Bright things which gleam unreck'd of, and in vain.
 Keep, keep thy riches, melancholy sea !
 We ask not such from thee.

Yet more, the depths have more ! what wealth untold
 Far down, and shining through their stillness lies !
 Thou hast the starry gems, the burning gold,
 Won from ten thousand royal Argosies,
 Sweep o'er thy spoils, thou wild and wrathful main !
 Earth claims not these again !

Yet more, the depths have more !—Thy waves have roll'd
 Above the cities of a world gone by !
 Sand hath fill'd up the palaces of old,
 Sea-weed o'ergrown the halls of revelry !
 Dash o'er them, ocean ! in thy scornful play,
 Man yields them to decay !

Yet more ! the billows and the depths have more !
 High hearts and brave are gather'd to thy breast !
 They hear not now the swelling waters roar,
 The battle-thunders will not break their rest.
 Keep thy red gold and gems, thou stormy grave,
 Give back the true and brave !

Give back the lost and lovely !—those for whom
 The place was kept at board and hearth so long !
 The prayer went up through midnight's breathless gloom,
 And the vain yearning woke 'midst festal song !
 Hold fast thy buried isles, thy towers o'erthrown—
 But all is not thine own !

To thee the love of woman hath gone down,
 Dark flow thy tides o'er manhood's noble head,
 O'er youth's bright locks and beauty's flowery crown ;
 Yet must thou hear a voice—Restore the dead !
 Earth shall reclaim her precious things from thee,
 Restore the dead, thou sea !